

C I T Y P L A N N I N G C O M M I S S I O N M I N U T E S

M A R C H 1 6, 2 0 0 6

The regular meeting of the City Planning Commission and public hearing convened on March 16, 2006 at 1:31pm in the City Council Chambers, 333 W. Ocean Boulevard, Long Beach, California.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS: Charles Winn, Charles Greenberg,
Morton Stuhlbarg, Mitch Rouse,
Nick Sramek

ABSENT: EXCUSED: Leslie Gentile, Matthew Jenkins

ACTING CHAIRMAN: Charles Winn

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Suzanne Frick, Director
Greg Carpenter, Planning Manager
Carolyn Bihn, Zoning Officer
Angela Reynolds, Advance Planning
Lynette Ferenczy, Planner
Steven Valdez, Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Mais, Deputy City Attorney
Marcia Gold, Minutes Clerk

P L E D G E O F A L L E G I A N C E

The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Greenberg.

M I N U T E S

The minutes of January 19, 2006 were approved on a motion by Commissioner Sramek, seconded by Commissioner Rouse, and passed 4-0-1, with Commissioner Greenberg abstaining and Commissioners Gentile and Jenkins absent.

The minutes of February 2, 2006 were approved on a motion by Commissioner Sramek, seconded by Commissioner Rouse and passed 5-0. Commissioners Gentle and Jenkins were absent.

S W E A R I N G O F W I T N E S S E S

C O N S E N T C A L E N D A R

1. Case No. 0507-22, Standards Variance, Local Coastal Development Permit, CE 05-137

Applicant: Mark Malan
Subject Site: 2533 E. 2nd Street (Council Dist. 2)
Description: Appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision to deny a Local Coastal Development Permit and Standards Variances for an accessory structure located in the front yard setback that exceeds the allowable height and floor area.

Mark Malan, 2533 E. 2nd Street, appellant, objected to the recommended continuation of his item saying he wanted to give a presentation.

Carolyn Bihn explained that the appellant had already had a month to present revised plans based on the Commission's recommendations from the original hearing. Ms. Bihn added that staff had met with Mr. Malan to discuss the issues and a possible resolution to the conflict, but no revised plans had yet been received, so a continuation was being requested.

Commissioner Greenberg pointed out that last-minute presentations were not recommended because the Commissioners then did not have enough time to review the material.

Commissioner Rouse observed that maybe the appellant didn't want to revise his original plans, in which case he could re-present them on their original merits.

Commissioner Stuhlbarg moved to continue the item to the April 6, 2006 meeting. Commissioner Greenberg seconded the motion, which passed 5-0. Commissioners Gentile and Jenkins were absent.

C O N T I N U E D I T E M S

2. Case No. 0510-12, Conditional Use Permit, CE 05-192

Applicant: Permit Place c/o Mike Robinson
Subject Site: 2201 Lakewood Blvd. (Council District 5)
Description: Request for approval of a Conditional Use Permit for check cashing/money transfer store in a neighborhood shopping center.

Steven Valdez presented the staff report reiterating the previously recommended denial of the request since there are already numerous financial institutions in the area, and because the use has the potential to raise the crime rate and calls for police service. Mr. Valdez presented a summary of police service calls for four similar use locations, showing that the only service call in the past six years at the site in question was regarding a repossessed vehicle.

Lt. Steven Ditmars, Long Beach Police Dept., explained that even if not criminal activity, the towing problems took time and attention from the police. Lt. Ditmars confirmed that these types of service calls were no more prevalent at check cashing facilities than they were in any high-density area.

Commissioner Greenberg remarked that he didn't see any difference in the impact of a check cashing operation vs. a payday advance, in comparing the police information.

Lt. Ditmars stated that anecdotally he had handled various instances at both types of facilities, and he felt they drew a criminal element more frequently than banks because of the cash being exchanged and the perception that banks were better protected.

Commissioner Rouse commented that many other businesses dispensed cash, and it was difficult to deny this one its rights because of a perception that customers could become crime victims.

Acting Chairman Winn added that he felt this was a necessary service since many residents did not have bank accounts and that the CUP would mandate security at this site.

Lt. Ditmars stated that if the request was approved, he strongly recommended requiring a security guard.

Mike Robinson, 5617 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, applicant representative, discussed the community meeting they had held.

Commissioner Greenberg suggested adding a condition requiring a review of the use's safety record with the Police Department and the possible requirement of a security guard.

Marina Miller-Foley, 13629 Rachel Road, Yucaipa, 92399, applicant representative, agreed to that condition, noting that security guards were always in their other locations to protect

customers and employees. Ms. Miller-Foley added that they were only planning on being open limited hours Monday through Saturday, and that the amount of cash given to customers was limited by corporate rules.

Commissioner Greenberg moved to approve the Conditional Use Permit, with an additional condition to require a review after six months and yearly thereafter to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Building.

Commissioner Sramek said he felt this type of business would be an attractive nuisance and a risky proposition, so he would not support the motion.

Commissioner Stuhlbarg seconded the motion, saying that he could support the need for the use given the limited hours of operation. The question was called, and the motion passed 4-1, with Commissioner Sramek dissenting. Commissioners Gentile and Jenkins were absent.

3. Case No. 0509-09, Site Plan Review, Lot Merger, Sign Standards Waiver, Standards Variance, ND 02-06

Applicant: Highland Carwash, LLC c/o Alan Burks
Subject Site: 4000-4040 Atlantic Ave. (Council District 8)
Description: Request for approval of Site Plan Review, Lot Merger, Sign Standards Waiver for signage located above the awning, and a Standards Variance to construct a one-story, 11,843 sq.ft. commercial building with a request to locate a two-way driveway on Marshall Place with a reduced setback from the intersection of Atlantic Avenue and an architectural element over 28' in height.

Lynette Ferenczy presented the staff report recommending approval of the requests since the proposed building was consistent with special development standards and the North Long Beach Design Guidelines for commercial development; and because the project would remove a nonconforming auto-related use and replace it with a conforming commercial use with code-required parking while minimizing pedestrian conflicts with the reduced driveway setback and enhancing the corner element of the building with the over height architectural element.

Alan Burks, 235 E. Broadway #406, project architect, responded to a concern of Commissioner Greenberg's regarding potential vandalism, saying that any problems would be fixed immediately.

Commissioner Stuhlbarg moved to certify Mitigated Negative Declaration 02-06 and to approve the Lot Merger, Site Plan Review, Sign Standards Waiver and Standards Variance requests, subject to conditions. Commissioner Sramek seconded the motion, which passed 5-0. Commissioners Gentile and Jenkins were absent.

R E G U L A R A G E N D A

4. PRESENTATION - Preliminary Downtown Visioning Tool

Suzanne Frick presented a new computer modeling program with three-dimensional maps of existing buildings and landmark structures to illustrate the overall low scale of current development in the City. Ms. Frick then projected an image of how the City would look if all the projects in development were approved and built, noting that this exercise demonstrated the need to evaluate whether additional density requirements were necessary in the downtown area, saying staff would be looking for input from the Commission and public on the matter.

5. PRESENTATION - Press Telegram Lofts Project

Jim Brophy, Managing Partner, October Five Development, LLC, stated that the project would address the need for affordable entry-level housing in the City while demographically connecting the different areas of the downtown area.

Mark Donahue, 1278 E. 34th Steet, Oakland, project designer, presented a model of the proposed project along with elevations and a site plan, and outlined the basis for the various design elements.

Commissioner Sramek said he had no problem with the number of condominiums planned, but was leery about the height of the project, which he thought could be precedent-setting and might lead to similar development in the area, compromising views on a large scale. Mr. Sramek said he didn't want to see spot zoning, but agreed the Press-Telegram building had to be preserved.

Commissioner Greenberg said he had doubts about committing to the project before it was further defined, and he expressed strong concern about why there was such a decrease in the parking requirements, suggesting that first a sector-wide analysis be done to test impacts if density was increased. Mr. Greenberg also said he felt the height and density at the core of the building was acceptable as long as it was well-planned

and would produce an urban infrastructure in the area. He added that he felt there was a definite need for this type of housing.

Commissioner Rouse applauded the quality of the project but noted that the mass and density looked out of place in this location; however, he agreed that as development moved up from Ocean Avenue, Pine was probably the most appropriate and inevitable location for these larger developments. Mr. Rouse also expressed concern about the parking issue, citing the heavy demand for the urban loft units.

Commissioner Stuhlbarg pointed out the urgent need for affordable housing for local university and medical staff, and suggested that special units be set aside for these types of employees. Mr. Stuhlbarg added that he wasn't concerned about the mass and density of the structure but rather the impact of the additional traffic on local streets.

Acting Chairman Winn declared the project looked terrific, and he was not concerned about the height or density either, but observed that it would only be economically feasible to build this kind of massive building without supporting parking if it was pedestrian oriented, with specially reserved areas for those types of commercial uses.

Jim Hansen, 651 - 5th Street, Hermosa Beach, 90254, Economic Development Director, Downtown Long Beach Association, said that their Board had not yet taken a position on the project, but said he felt that so far it was consistent with their goals--and creative and visionary--and would take development up Pine Avenue.

M A T T E R S F R O M T H E A U D I E N C E

There were no matters from the audience.

M A T T E R S F R O M T H E D E P A R T M E N T O F P L A N N I N G A N D B U I L D I N G

Carolynne Bihn introduced Cuentin Jackson, a new planner.

M A T T E R S F R O M T H E P L A N N I N G C O M M I S S I O N

Commissioner Greenberg noted that he had nothing against check cashing operations, but that because the staff and Police Department didn't like them, there was never enough evidence

presented to the Commission to allow a more balanced decision, and he asked that more site-specific evidence and information be presented in these types of cases in the future.

A D J O U R N

The meeting adjourned at 3:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Gold
Minutes Clerk